

Engineers remodel school

Story and photos by G. Lane Miley

ADAILOU, Djibouti – “Public education ... is the gateway to hope,” President George W. Bush, said recently. “The future of this country depends on our capacity to educate every child.”

With that in mind, soldiers assigned to Detachment 2 with the Army’s 463rd Engineer Battalion recently did their part to foster relationships with the people of Adailou and facilitate the educations of

Djiboutian children in the village.

The crew took on the nearly \$20,000 job of making the school a more suitable learning environment while supporting Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa.

“The people were real good. Most of them were happy to see us,” Army Staff Sgt. Timothy L. Dillon said of the villagers.

Dillon, a Parkersburg, W. Va., native said he was impressed the amount of structure in the village. Unlike other projects he has worked on during his more than nine months here, the people of Adailou seem to really put forth an effort and take care of their possessions.

“The biggest problem here is the termites because the village is located in the mountains and the temperatures are milder,” Dillon said.

The construction supervisor said the locals agreed to paint the completed project, which included remodeling a house into a library, renovating two classrooms and adding a porch to one of the existing school buildings. Painting the soldiers’ work will reduce the termites’ ability to destroy it and serve as the final phase before the school is dedicated.

The combined efforts of this project will serve as an example for others in the area.

“I know I’m doing my part,” explained Spc. Micah Patterson, a carpentry and masonry specialist, as he built a bookshelf for the school’s library.

In addition to the bookshelves, the soldiers framed ceilings, installed doors and windows with new shutters. The engineers also connected the village’s generator to lights and fans in the classrooms that French

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(Top) A carpentry and masonry specialist with the 463rd Engineers, hammers nails into a bookshelf for the village’s new library. (Bottom) School children from Adailou attend class. The renovated school building will provide a better learning environment.



Martin Luther King Jr.

His leagacy, still King

by Timothy F. Smith,
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At a moment in history when so much attention is focused on terrorism, cruelty and war, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the life and work of a great man who stood for peace – Martin Luther King Jr.

Today marks King’s birthday celebration and is a time for Americans to reflect on the deep wounds of our racial past and our hope of a peaceful future that includes equality and opportunity for every man, woman and child.

A minister and scholar, King was a man of conscience who emerged from relative obscurity to lead a movement for equal rights ... human rights ... for African-Americans and, in fact, people across the globe.

Martin Luther King was, above all, a student of tolerance and a man of peace. It was King who led a non-violent, principled civil rights movement that not only changed America, but also carried a message of justice, equality and opportunity to the world.

America, of course, has not yet achieved perfection as a society, nor is the larger world a faultless place. There is still more than enough conflict and contention to keep diplomats like me, and members of the military like you, gainfully employed for years to come.

Yet, we’ve made remarkable strides in recent memory.

This is a time in our history when it is no longer just a theoretical possibility for an African-American man to become Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff or Secretary of State – it’s a reality. It is an age in which the service of a black woman as the National Security Advisor to the President of the United States is not just a distant dream – it’s a fact.

How did we get here? As Secretary of State Colin Powell once said: “We stood on the shoulders of those who came before us, those whose lives were characterized by struggle and sacrifice and dreams of a better day.” No one’s shoulders were broader than those of King.